



# News Release

## 32ND INFANTRY BRIGADE COMBAT TEAM

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Red Arrow Soldiers commemorate Bataan Death March in New Mexico desert**

WHITE SANDS MISSILE RANGE, N.M. — More than 200 mobilized 32nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team Soldiers from Wisconsin participated in the 20th Annual Bataan Memorial Death March Sunday at White Sands Missile Range, N.M.

The Bataan Memorial Death March is one of the toughest marathons in the United States. It honors World War II prisoners of war who were forced by the Japanese to march for days in the tropical heat of the Philippines in 1942. Thousands of POWs died during the ordeal.

“Remembering what they went through kept me going,” said Spc. Andrew Vannieuwehoven of Green Bay, whose team, Juggernaut, finished first in the National Guard heavy team category.

Individuals or teams of five could compete in either the full 26.2 mile route or the 15.2 mile honorary route, and could choose the light or heavy category. Heavy category participants were required to carry a minimum of 35 pounds on their backs.

“The scenery was incredibly beautiful, but the sand, wind and hills made it an extremely difficult course,” said 1st Lt. Michael Lee of the 32nd Brigade Headquarters Company. Lee finished 15th out of 454 in the 26.2 mile light category.

A record high 5,300 people participated in the march. Representatives from all 50 U.S. states and eight countries participated. The march included civilian participants and members of each branch of the U.S. armed forces.

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Top 32nd Brigade competitors included Staff Sgt. Mark Mithun of River Falls, who finished fifth in the military male light category and first overall among Red Arrow Soldiers; Pfc. Coady Schiltz of Columbus, who finished 36th in the military male heavy category; team NCCCM of the 829th Engineers finished fifth in the coed light team category; and team Red Arrow finished 10th in the military male light team category.

The Wisconsin National Guard's 32nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team has been training at Fort Bliss since the end of February and will ship out for Iraq in about a month.

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### Photos available:



Three Soldiers from Menomonie-based Co. A, 1-128th Infantry, cross the finish line together less than seven hours after they began the 26.2 mile marathon. Left to right, they are 1st Lt. Kelsey Erickson, Eau Claire; Pfc. Chris Wolf, Menomonie; and Spc. Scott Meeds, Siren. U.S. Army photo.



Team Juggernaut, made up of five Soldiers from Green Bay-based Co., B, 2-127th Infantry crosses the finish line in first place in the National Guard Heavy category. Team members are Spc. Andrew Vannieuwehoven, Green Bay; Pfc. Jesse Tlachac, Sturgeon Bay; Sgt. Ryan Gries, Madison; Pfc. Eric Sallenbach, Green Bay; and Pfc. Kyle Cooper, Appleton. U.S. Army photo.

For high resolution photos, email [tim.donovan@us.army.mil](mailto:tim.donovan@us.army.mil)

Other photos also available.